

MARILYN L. TAYLOR

## To the Mother of a Dead Marine

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Your boy once touched me, yes. I knew you knew  
when your wet, reddened gaze drilled into me,  
groped through my clothes for signs, some residue  
of him—some lusciousness of mine that he  
had craved, that might have driven his desire  
for things perilous, poisonous, out-of-bounds.  
Could I have been the beast he rode to war?  
The battle mounted in his sleep, the rounds  
of ammunition draped like unblown blossoms  
round his neck? Could I have somehow flung  
myself against the wall of his obsessions,  
leaving spells and curses on his tongue?  
Your fingers tighten, ready to engage  
the delicate hair-trigger of your rage.